



# Bellevue Planning Commission

May 11, 2022

## PLANNING COMMISSION STUDY SESSION ITEM

### SUBJECT

Study Session on the Wilburton Vision Implementation work program

### STAFF CONTACTS

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### POLICY ISSUES

The Wilburton Vision Implementation planning initiative will amend the existing Wilburton/8th Street Subarea Plan and BelRed Subarea Plan, the Comprehensive Plan Map, and the City's Land Use Code. These amendments will consider how Wilburton's future is a key component in implementing the citywide growth strategy for housing and jobs for the next 20 years.

### DIRECTION NEEDED FROM THE PLANNING COMMISSION

**ACTION**



**DIRECTION**



**INFORMATION ONLY**



As we move forward with the Wilburton Vision Implementation work plan over the next two years, staff will return to the Planning Commission to share draft land use alternatives that will be analyzed as part of the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process, draft policy and Subarea Plan amendments in late 2022 - 2023 and draft land use code amendments in late 2023 to mid-2024.

### BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

In May 2016, the Wilburton planning process was kicked off with an Urban Land Institute (ULI) Advisory Panel study. The ULI panel identified recommendations to develop the Wilburton study area as a complete community with a full range of uses integrating community and recreation facilities along with affordable and sustainable residential and commercial opportunities.

In January 2017, the Council-appointed 15 member Wilburton Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) was convened. The CAC completed their work with issuance of the Wilburton Commercial Area Study report in July 2018 (See [CAC report](#)). The CAC study articulates a preferred urban design framework and recommended strategies for achieving a vibrant urban neighborhood that promotes multi-modal transportation options, capitalizes on the investment in light rail, increases opportunities for housing and office development, and creates a defining urban environment with Eastrail (formerly Eastside Rail Corridor).

As part of the Wilburton visioning process and concurrent with the CAC work, a Draft EIS was prepared that studied the potential impacts of alternatives for a future mixed use, transit-oriented neighborhood in comparison to a “No Action” alternative. This DEIS included alternatives for accommodating new development within a 2035 planning horizon.

In the years following the completion of the 2018 DEIS and CAC study, Bellevue has continued to grow and transform into a major urban center. Office development, primarily in Downtown and BelRed, is on pace to exceed the City’s 2035 growth targets and housing growth is behind pace to meet the City’s 2035 housing growth targets. In February 2022, Council provided direction to ratify the King County Countywide Planning Policies, which include new housing and job growth targets to be accommodated within the 2044 planning horizon. The City is underway with the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update which provides the opportunity to consider how Wilburton will play a key role in meeting the City’s new growth targets. Wilburton will be able to contribute towards balancing job and housing growth while realizing Bellevue’s vision for an innovative, diverse, equitable and sustainable community.

### **Council Direction for Wilburton**

At their April 25 meeting, the City Council directed staff to proceed with the Wilburton Vision Implementation work plan via the following motion:

Direct staff to initiate work on the Wilburton Vision Implementation Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA) and Land Use Code Amendment (LUCA), and to use the CAC’s preferred alternative as a baseline. This will be the starting point with a scope of work that evaluates the preferred alternative to determine whether updates need to be considered in the areas of housing policy, growth targets, Grand Connection impacts and integration, sustainability, equitable access, and multimodal transportation such as Eastrail walkability and the proposed Lake Hills Connector access. Councilmember Robertson seconded the motion, with a friendly amendment to include affordable housing in the housing policy and to add universal design as a consideration. Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis accepted the friendly amendment.

### **Wilburton Vision Implementation Approach**

The alignment of the Wilburton Vision Implementation with the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update timeline presents an opportunity to better communicate, analyze, and plan for how the future of Wilburton relates to the future of the City as a whole. The Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update launched in February will include environmental review in the form of an EIS. Since the Wilburton EIS was not completed and some of the existing conditions and analysis content needs to be updated, staff will be including environmental review for Wilburton in the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update EIS. By coordinating environmental review in this way, the City can better assess how Wilburton’s future complements and/or impacts the future of the City as a whole.

The following elements will be incorporated in the Wilburton Vision Implementation:

- The Eastrail Framework Plan will be completed in June and help inform the development of design guidelines, particularly for areas adjacent to the Eastrail corridor.
- Important considerations, such as the eastern terminus of the NE 6th Street extension (either 116th Avenue NE or 120th Avenue NE) will be resolved in the Wilburton process.

- The recently-adopted Grand Connection Sequence One Design Guidelines and Standards covering downtown will inform design guidelines for development in Wilburton as appropriate.
- There is an opportunity to plan for additional residential development in Wilburton to help meet the need for housing proximate to jobs, regional transit, and amenities such as Eastrail.

### **Community Engagement**

The engagement strategy for the Wilburton Vision Implementation considers that significant stakeholder engagement was undertaken in 2017- 2018 to develop a vision for Wilburton, identifying key land use, housing, transportation, open space, and urban design principles. More recently, community outreach events for the Wilburton Eastrail Framework Plan in Summer 2021 have engaged a broader cross-section of the community in sharing ideas and preferences for Wilburton’s future.

The following are the overall objectives for community engagement (see Attachment B for more detail):

- Inform the community about the previous planning work and vision for Wilburton, and the interface of Wilburton with the Citywide Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update.
- Keep interested parties (residents, business owners, property owners, and developers) informed of the status of the Wilburton Vision Implementation and how they can engage.
- Seek feedback on an ongoing basis from interested parties on the full range of topics influenced by proposed comprehensive plan policy amendments, zoning changes, development standards and design guidelines.
- Ensure that information is well-documented and available to interested parties.
- Set consistent expectations among interested parties, City staff, and decision-makers.

### **Upcoming Schedule and Adoption Process**

The Wilburton work plan schedule is represented by three major phases of work: Phase 1. Re-Engagement and alignment of the Wilburton Vision with the future state of the City overall; Phase 2. Future land use and policy development; and Phase 3. Land Use Code Amendment. The following are the focus areas and the milestones within each phase:

- Phase 1: Now – Sept 2022
  - Community Re-Engagement (including board and commission briefings)
  - EIS Scoping completed
  - Initial draft land use alternatives developed
- Phase 2: Comprehensive Plan Amendment Q2 2022 – Q3 2023
  - Draft EIS Q1 2023
  - Final EIS Q2 2023
  - Preferred land use alternative finalized
  - Planning Commission review and recommendation on CPA
- Phase 3: Land Use Code Amendment Q2 2023 – Q2 2024
  - Draft LUCA is developed
  - Wilburton CPA is adopted by City Council
  - Planning Commission review and recommendation on proposed LUCA

**ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A: Scope of Work Summary

Attachment B: Community Engagement Plan